

"Celebrating 30 Years of Small Business Success"



September 15, 2014

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America's SBDC Annual Conference Wrap Up

Special congratulations to our Illinois SBDC Associate State Director, Rod Hollenstine for another outstanding America's SBDC Annual Conference! 2014 marks the 5th year that Rod has lead the ASBDC Conference Committee as Chairman. Excellent Job, Rod, for another outstanding conference! This is the last year for Rod to serve as Chairman but our own, hardworking Joel Youngs, director of the Illinois SBDC at Black Hawk College will continue to serve on the conference committee. Also special congratulations go out to Harriet Parker, the director of the Illinois SBDC at Waubensee Community College in Aurora for being recognized as the Illinois SBDC State Star at the Annual Conference. Finally, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of you for your kind and encouraging words of congratulations for being elected to the America's SBDC Board of Directors and Board Chairman. Your thoughts are truly appreciated. Thank you. It's going to be a great year!

State of Women-Owned Business Report

On AmericanExpress.com, 8/13/14 - As the United States continues to crawl out of its economic slump, women are emerging as key drivers in new business creation, according to new research. This year's [OPEN State of Women-Owned Business report](#) finds that an estimated 1,200 new businesses a day were started by women over the past year, up from an average of 740 a day the year prior. Four out of 10 new firms are now started by women.

The fourth-annual report also shows the influence of companies owned by women of color, which now account for one-third of all women-owned businesses in the United States. While firms owned by women of color are smaller than non-minority women-owned businesses both in terms of average number of employees and revenue, their growth in number is generally far outpacing that of all women-owned firms.

Other key findings from the report include:

- 1. There are now 9.1 million women-owned businesses in the United States**

These firms generate more than \$1.4 trillion in revenue and employ more than 7.8 million people, according to the report.

2. The top state for women-owned businesses is . . .

In terms of growth in combined economic clout (which averages together growth in number, revenue, and employment), North Dakota is the top state for women-owned firms.

3. Small-business ownership by women of color is growing rapidly

Since 1997, firms owned by women of color have seen faster growth in terms of total number of firms, employees, and revenue compared with all women-owned firms.

Comprising just 17 percent of women-owned firms 17 years ago, firms owned by women of color now account for one in three (32 percent) of women-owned firms in the United States.

4. Women-owned firms are expanding across industries

Women-owned firms now lead growth in eight of the top 13 industries, reflecting a continued diversification. Sectors where women-owned firms are leading growth include real estate, finance/insurance, and wholesale trade. Women-owned firms lag sector growth in two industries—educational services, which has seen the greatest sector growth in the past decade, and retail/trade, which has shown anemic growth overall.

5. Despite the proliferation of women-owned businesses, there's more to do

The number of women-owned firms continues to grow at a rate exceeding the national average, yet women-owned firms only employ 6 percent of the nation's workforce and contribute just under 4 percent of business revenues—roughly the same share they contributed in 1997. The report notes that “the real issue at hand is not getting more women to start business, but rather providing support to women who are already in business to enable them to grow their enterprises to the next level.” The report recommends that policy and programmatic support target firms with five to nine employees, and those aiming at, but just shy of, the million-dollar mark.

You can read the full report [here](#) to learn more about the state of women-owned businesses in the United States—and what more can be done to support these women leaders.

See more including graphs at: <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/women-launching-1200-new-businesses-a-day-new-research-shows/?intlink=us-open-forum-whattrend-0>

Small Business Quarterly Bulletin

The Office of Advocacy has released its Small Business Quarterly Bulletin for Second Quarter 2014. This two-page publication includes figures and tables of economic indicators to show the status of small business. This latest quarterly bulletin shows promising signs for small businesses. The bulletin includes data about proprietors' income, establishment births and deaths and various small business employment variables.

The Small Business Quarterly Bulletin for Second Quarter 2014 is available online at http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/sb_q1_2014q2_FIN_0.pdf. For more information about the Office of Advocacy, visit their website at www.sba.gov/advocacy or telephone (202) 205-6533.

Upcoming USPTO Webinar

The USPTO has launched an updated online library of free resources, a toolkit, on USPTO.gov that is designed to help smaller companies, 'Main Street' businesses, and individual consumers better understand what steps they can take if they receive a patent infringement letter.

Main street business owners and consumers have received letters accusing them of using a patented invention, along with demands for money to settle the dispute. The USPTO will be hosting a webinar discussing the Patent Litigation Online Tool Kit. The litigation tool kit answers common questions about patent litigation such as:

What are my options for responding to the suit? How can I tell whether or not I'm infringing? How do I find a lawyer? How can I challenge a patent or patent application?

This webinar will also highlight free resources and tools that may be of assistance if you are accused of infringement.

PATENT LITIGATION ONLINE TOOL KIT

WHEN: September 18, 2014, Noon until 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Webcast Information:

1. Dial In: 1-571-270-7000 - Event number: 641 836 089 - Event password: 12345

2. Video portion can be reached at the following address: <https://uspto-events2.webex.com/uspto-events2/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=641836089>

Program Success of the Week – Meme's Market

Meme's Market on 1440 W 10th Street in Metropolis, Illinois opened in July 2014 and is operated as a sole proprietorship by Lameagon Chambers. Ms. Chambers started making her own marinara in 2008 as a hobby. After receiving the encouragement of friends she decided to open a store market the marinara and other products.

Meme's features a homemade gluten-free marinara sauce. The marinara can be used straight out of the jar or with main dishes like beef, chicken, pork, or as a base for soups. It is considered a low calorie and low fat sauce. Meme's also sells white or brown rice loaf bread, whole wheat pasta, gluten-free pasta, gluten free all purpose flour, local honey, jams & jellies and BBQ sauce.

Ms. Chambers creates decorative gift baskets that showcase her marinara sauce. These baskets have become an important marketing tool. Meme's Market advertises on Facebook, a website, and through coupons placed on-line and through email. Ms. Chambers also appears on local radio to promote Meme's Market. Future plans include on-line sales as well as selling at farmers markets and trade shows. National and regional distributors have expressed an interest in carrying the marinara.

Ms. Chambers contacted the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Shawnee Community College to receive assistance in preparing a business plan and to learn about financing options. She utilized the City of Metropolis Revolving Loan fund with participation by Shawnee Development Council to open her business. Mr. Chambers says, "I really appreciate the services provided by the SBDC in preparing a business plan. At first it looked a little overwhelming but they showed me step-by-step the information I needed. That made the process much easier. By being able to obtain financing, I was able to open a storefront and market my products more extensively. I would highly recommend the services of the SBDC to anyone who is considering starting or expanding a business."

Meme's is located at 1440 W 10TH ST, Metropolis IL 62960-2429 and is open Monday through Friday from 9AM-6PM and on Saturday from 10AM-4PM. You can see them online at <https://www.facebook.com/memesmarket1440>.

Resource of the Week – Visa Best Practices & Small Biz Resources

Find tips on dealing with credit purchases, data breaches and other issues from the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council.

<http://www.sbecouncil.org/category/best-practices-and-resources/>

Neoserra Update – Adding an Advisor to Neoserra

When a new advisor joins your team please call Tom Becker to set up an account in Neoserra. He will need the person's email address and phone number. Please follow directions at the link below to set up the advisor record that is linked to your center.

<http://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n205>

Moves and News

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) today has announced a funding opportunity under the Regional Innovation Grants Program. Applications are due by November 3rd.

EDA is committed to helping foster connected, innovation-centric economic sectors which support commercialization and entrepreneurship as described in the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010. Working with regions across the country to develop regional innovation strategies, including regional innovation clusters, is also a Strategic Goal of the DOC's FY 2014- 2018 Strategic Plan and a keystone of the Secretary's commitment to building globally competitive regions. As part of this strategy, funding is available for capacity-building activities that include Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers as well as scaling of existing commercialization programs and centers; feasibility studies for the creation and expansion of facilities such as science and research parks; and supporting opportunities to close the funding gap for early-stage companies.

To realize these objectives, EDA's existing i6 Challenge is

1. FY 2014 i6 Challenge

Up to \$8 million for the FY 2014 i6 Challenge, from which EDA expects to award approximately 16 or more grants each valued at a maximum of \$500,000.

2. Science and Research Park Development Grants

Up to \$5 million for Science and Research Park Development Grants in FY 2014, from which EDA expects to award approximately 10 or more grants each valued at a maximum of \$500,000.

3. Cluster Grants for Seed Funds

Up to \$2 million for Cluster Grants for Seed Funds, from which EDA expects to award approximately 8 or more grants each valued at a maximum of \$250,000.

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards under each of these three competitions.

being joined by additional grant opportunities to create the Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) Program. Under this program, EDA is soliciting applications for three separate competitions:

1. 2014 i6 Challenge

2. Science and Research Park Development Grants; and
3. Cluster Grants for Seed Capital Funds.

Requirements for i6 Challenge Projects

The i6 Challenge will invest in the development, creation, or expansion of Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers which accelerate innovation-led economic development in pursuit of a vibrant innovative economy and economic growth. Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers can be physical or virtual, existing or new. Existing Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers need not have previously received EDA funds to be considered for this award. To be eligible under the i6 Challenge, a proposed project must focus on driving economic development by building capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship, enabling individuals, firms and communities to achieve greater prosperity and quality of life. Specifically, applications must focus on one or more of the following project outputs:

Innovation: Projects that nurture innovation broadly, and market-based applications for that innovation specifically, through the:

- Creation of a broad-based, expansive culture of idea generation and the useful application of that innovation, including converting research and development at universities and research centers into commercially viable enterprises;
- Engagement of a diverse set of researchers, innovators and practitioners supporting commercialization of inventions, ideas and/or research. Diversity can be defined by intellectual approach, innovation, background or experience; and
- Engagement with industry professionals, investors, and successful entrepreneurs with innovation at its earliest stages to create the best climate, team and opportunities for an emerging high-growth startup or acceleration of an existing startup.

Entrepreneurship: Projects that develop a large number of high-growth entrepreneurs across disciplines and create an ecosystem for those entrepreneurs to experiment and commercialize their innovations, as determined by:

- Support of educational programs and/or work experiences to prepare students³ and researchers for entrepreneurial challenges and work environments; and
- Growth of the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem to ensure a steady stream of high-growth startups to drive job and value creation in the home region.

Regional Connectivity: Projects that connect the community of economic development and commercialization resources through:

- Special events to showcase inventions, ideas, research, technologies, and entrepreneurs to promote the exchange of ideas leading to the formation of new collaborations and ultimately the commercialization of innovations.
- Engagement with local business associations and government to ensure that high growth

entrepreneurs and companies are more fully integrated into the local business community, and that their growing needs are addressed by a robust support network that includes specialized and readily-accessed technical assistance, access to capital, business associations and government officials.

Commercialization of Research: Projects that convert ideas, research, or prototypes into viable products and services that can be monetized and brought to market in a financially manageable and rapid manner, as defined by:

- o Incorporation of mentors, industry catalysts and entrepreneurs in residence that provide advisory services and link technology and researchers to external networks;

- Access to seed funding to support the commercialization of promising research through networks created by the organization or outside funding networks and tools;

- Assistance with market evaluation, business planning, and business opportunity articulation; and

- Creation of processes that integrate scientific review with market potential to greatly accelerate the best ideas from lab to market.

Eligible applicants for EDA financial assistance under this FFO include: a State; an Indian tribe; a city or other political subdivision of a State; an entity that—

- a. is a nonprofit organization, an institution of higher education, a public-private partnership, a science or research park, a Federal laboratory, or an economic development organization or similar entity; and

- b. has an application that is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State; or

- c. a consortium of any of these entities described in subparagraph

For Science and Research Park Development Grants *only*, in addition to the types of applicants listed above, the following applicants are also eligible to apply:

- a Hospital;

- a Commercial organization; or,

- 8. a consortium of any of the all enumerated entities

Please note that while commercial organizations are eligible entities for Science and Research Park Development grants, in evaluating applications, EDA will provide preference to organizations and consortia that demonstrate regional collaboration and the ability to leverage and complement existing state, local, and non-profit organization programs and initiatives that support science and research, such as university-based programs, National Laboratories, etc. See section V.A.2.b. See 15 U.S.C. § 3722.

An information webinar will be available for viewing at www.eda.gov.

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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